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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7335

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 000065

DEPT FOR PRM:RMACKLER AND RGEHRING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2019

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PO](#)

SUBJECT: FURTHER ON PORTUGAL'S CONSIDERATION OF CUBAN MIGRANTS

REF: A. LISBON 0019
[¶](#)B. RMACKLER/RREITER 26JAN09 EMAIL EXCHANGE

Classified By: POL/ECON COUNSELOR RICHARD REITER, FOR 1.4 B, D.

[¶](#)1. (C) On January 29, DCM and Pol/Econ Counselor met a second time with Rui Macieira, Deputy PolDir for Security Issues at the Portuguese MFA. This meeting followed up our Jan. 9 discussion (ref A) of the possibility of Portugal accepting for resettlement Cuban migrants currently at Guantanamo. We provided Macieira the non-paper provided by PRM (ref B) and background information on the eight migrants currently available for resettlement.

[¶](#)2. (C) Macieira provided the following responses to our questions:

- the two-year and five-year residency permits that Portugal grants to asylees are/are renewable or convertible to permanent residency, depending on whether the individual's fear of persecution remains in effect and/or whether he wishes to remain in Portugal. Asylees are granted the right to work. After five years, asylees have the option of naturalizing as Portuguese citizens;

- Macieira requested that news of Portuguese consideration of Cuban migrants not be shared with UNHCR at this time, as the GOP's thinking is still internal and not fully-developed.

[¶](#)3. (C) Macieira shared Portugal's recent asylum numbers:

	Requests for Asylum	Cases Approved
2006	128	30
2007	224	30
2008	161	81

As noted in ref A, Portugal accepts 30 cases from UNHCR each year. In 2006-2007, it did not approve any cases except those referred by UNHCR. Last year it approved 51 outside of UNHCR, including some from Malta and a large extended Iraqi family.

[¶](#)4. (C) Macieira welcomed the detailed information we provided and said consideration of the issue is proceeding at a high level in the MFA, both at the general level of whether this is something Portugal wants to become involved with, and specifically on modalities. We take it as a positive that the GOP has not yet said "no", but neither have they expressed much enthusiasm. We will await Macieira's response and stand ready to answer further Portuguese questions as they arise.

STEPHENSON